Dear Spackenkill Community,

One of our articles is about second graders learning what it means to give thanks on tomorrow's American holiday. I am grateful to host our family's traditional Thanksgiving dinner.

Enjoy this week's holiday break. I give thanks for our families and the joy of being part of a special community called Spackenkill.

My best,

Mark Villanti, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

---

Celebrating the 50th Day of Learning

Kindergarten classes celebrated the 50th day of school on Monday, November 25th. Students dressed up in 50s outfits and enjoyed root beer floats, bubble gum chewing contests, and hula hooping. The students were delighted to go back in time and learn about what life was like way back when. They were very proud to have completed 50 days of learning.
Above: Some scenes from kindergarten classrooms. The children enjoyed dressing up and learning about life in another era. Teachers supplied backdrops that recreated a 50s diner.

High School Musicians Shine

This past weekend, the Area All-State Music Festival took place in the Hudson City School District. Some 3,000 musicians vied for 400 spots in this festival, and Spackenkill was well represented in all areas.

Congratulations to the following students and their directors, Holden Maiorana, Victor Catanzaro, and Marissa Kaczynski.

Mixed Chorus: Caitlin Facci, John Mulcahy, John Ryan, Emanuel Faltakes

Treble Choir: Nitya Upadhyayula, Baylee Kramer

Band: Vanessa Aagaard

Orchestra: Robert DeLaurentis, Cecelia Kim, Natalia Murphy, Midori Saeki, Edison Sung

[Click here to read the program.]
Dr. Donna Riter worked with Hagan teachers on social emotional learning techniques this week. She provided many strategies for optimizing learning in the classroom in the face of challenges. Teachers always enjoy her presentations, which draw on anecdotes from her own life encompassing 37 years in education. Her focus in working with teachers is to build a level of confidence, knowledge and skills that will promote classrooms that are oriented towards conflict resolution rather than conflict cycle.

SRO Steve Doughty visited Mr. Aagaard’s health students this week to discuss blood alcohol content and how police officers test drivers for DWI. He demonstrated standard tests that involve tracking eye movements with a pen. “The eyes don’t lie,” he said. Students also “walked the line” to demonstrate balance. Some students volunteered to wear goggles, which simulated a .10 blood alcohol content and significantly compromised their abilities to catch and throw a ball. Officer Doughty discussed the seriousness of DWI, not only for safety reasons but also because it could result in
being arrested or having your license suspended. The students asked plenty of questions and left the classroom with a much greater understanding of police procedures and the law.

Above: SRO Doughty walks students through sobriety tests.

Spackenkill Gives Thanks

Elementary classrooms celebrated the season this week and last, crafting, singing, feasting, and learning about customs and traditions.

Kindergarten students in Mrs. Roberts' class put on a wonderful Thanksgiving-themed presentation for their families last week. The students prepared for the day by making beautiful crafts to decorate their tables. They sang songs about the season and spoke about gratitude. Each student had an individual line to recite. Afterward, they enjoyed traditional Thanksgiving dishes.

This week, Mrs. Cunningham's kindergartners welcomed their loved ones to a Thanksgiving feast with all the trimmings. Their costumes were especially wonderful, and they also made keepsake decorations that expressed what they are thankful for. From babies to grandmas, there were images in attendance enjoying this wonderful meal.

Thank you to all the parents and family members who attended and of course provided the tasty food!
Above: Scenes from kindergarten celebrations in Mrs. Roberts' and Mrs. Cunningham’s classrooms.

Second Graders Collaborate

All of the second graders were involved in a Thanksgiving Share activity on Monday. The students have been learning about the history of Thanksgiving and what it means to be thankful. To celebrate the act of sharing and community, each second grade class made an item to share with each other. Students enjoyed sharing trail mix, acorn cookies, pumpkin fluff, chili and a corn-and-bean salsa. The children had fun preparing these items in class working cooperatively, but it was even more special to share them with their friends in different classes. Mrs. Strapec, Mrs. Turner, Mrs. Wilcox, Mrs. Boyce, Mrs. Zanca, and Mrs. Christolon would like to thank everyone for donating an item in order for our share to be successful and we hope everyone has a lovely Thanksgiving.
Second graders worked with Mrs. Strapec and Mrs. Byrne to learn how to cut and paste while working on laptops in Google Classroom. The activity was themed around Thanksgiving. Students enjoyed typing what they are thankful for after they assembled their turkeys. Mrs. Strapec and her class hope everyone has a nice Thanksgiving!
Overflowing with Gratitude

Mrs. Wilson and Mrs. LaGasse’s fifth graders prepared cornucopias as Thanksgiving centerpiece gifts this week. They constructed the horns of plenty from dough and filled them with fruits and candles. Not only are they centerpieces, but they are also gifts for special recipients.
Mission: Inspired by a tradition of excellence and a spirit of continuous improvement, the Spackenkill School District will provide all of our students with the academic and social skills necessary to pursue their goals and become responsible citizens in an interdependent global community.

Vision: All Spackenkill graduates will be lifelong learners who are inspired to pursue their dreams and contribute to the global society.

Please submit story ideas to mary.forsell@suefsny.org